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GCR chairman issues progress report

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Southern Baptists must be gripped anew by the lostness of the world, repent of their self-centeredness, and focus their local churches on taking the Gospel to those who have yet to hear, the chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) Task Force said on Feb. 22 to the SBC Executive Committee in Nashville.

Toward that end, Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Church in Springdale, Ar., presented a progress report to the Executive Committee on the task force's work that included six components of a vision they believe Southern Baptists will rally around and experience renewed passion for the Great Commission — making disciples of all the world's people groups.

The entire progress report can be read at www.pray4gcr.com.

To open his 90-minute presentation, Floyd drew on Joel 2:12-17 to deliver a challenge about the need for urgent, wholehearted repentance if Southern Baptists are to participate in the evangelistic harvest that will accompany the outpouring of God's Spirit in the last days — and can be seen already beginning in some parts of the world.

"I believe with all my heart that God is calling us to return to Him now in deep repentance of our sin, in brokenness over our sin, denying our pride and selfishness and returning to God with complete humility," Floyd said. "The boasting, ego and pride that goes on in our lives, our churches and our denomination is unacceptable to God. The disunity in our churches and in our denomination is so wrong and sinful. We need to repent and return to God."

"With rhetoric we bemoan our dismal baptism numbers, our declining and plateaued churches, and our economic selfishness. The casting of criticism has resulted in a caustic cynicism that just adds to our rhetoric and writings," Floyd continued. "We attempt to treat symptoms rather than the root issues of sin and carnality. The rhetoric needs to cease and the repentance personally and corporately must begin. We need to repent of our sins and return to God."

"[W]e realize our number one need is to return to God in deep repentance and experience a fresh wave of His Spirit upon our lives, ministries and work of our denomination," Floyd said. "We need a fresh and compelling vision that will only come when we are right with Him."

Southern Baptists need to understand the "staggering" lostness of North America — where 258 million of 340 million residents are estimated to be lost — and the entire world — where four billion of 6.8 billion people have little to no access to the Gospel, Floyd said. Penetrating such massive lostness requires each of the 50,000-plus Southern Baptist churches to become its own "missional strategy center," Floyd added.

"If we do not begin to understand the complexity of lostness in our own back-



TASK FORCE REPORT — Great Commission Resurgence Task Force chairman Ronnie Floyd presents the group's progress report to the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee on Feb. 22 in Nashville. (BP photo)

yard and strategize to reach them, the lostness will never be penetrated with the Gospel," Floyd declared. "Business as usual and what we are doing as a whole is not working. It is said, 'Facts are our friends.' This is true, as long as we pay attention to the facts and do not act as though they are non-existent. If we deny the present reality of where we really are, we are jeopardizing our future and the generations who will follow us. We need to return to God and recommit ourselves to advancing the Gospel to all generations."

Floyd said he hoped the progress report the task force was bringing would be "clear and compelling" as it unveiled "some of the things we believe need to be done" to help Southern Baptists work together more faithfully and effectively to advance the Gospel. At the SBC annual meeting in Orlando next June, Floyd said, the task force will ask the convention "to accept this vision, endorse this vision and champion this vision."

Six components

The six components of the task force's vision Floyd presented involve:

- Calling Southern Baptists "to rally towards a clear and compelling missional vision and begin to conduct ourselves with core values that will create a new and healthy culture within the Southern Baptist Convention." The "missional vision" is "as a convention of churches... to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world and to make disciples of all the nations." The eight core values are Christ-likeness, Truth, Unity, Relationships, Trust, Future, Local Church and Kingdom.
- Recommending the North American

Mission Board "prioritize efforts to plant churches in North America and to reach our nation's cities and clarify its role to lead and accomplish efforts to reach North America with the Gospel." The North American Mission Board needs to be "reinvented and released" by implementing a direct strategy for planting churches in North America "with a priority to reach metropolitan areas and under-served people groups," Floyd said. The plan also calls for NAMB to assist churches in evangelism, discipleship and developing current pastoral leadership. It calls for NAMB to decentralize operations into seven regions and recommends releasing the entity from "cooperative agreements" with state conventions over the course of four years to free up money for national strategy.

• Requesting Southern Baptists "entrust to the International Mission Board the ministry to reach the unreached and under-served people groups without regard to any geographic limitations." "Globalization has flattened the world," Floyd said. "While years ago a people group was located within a specific geographical location, this is no longer reality. Reality today is that these people groups are located all over the world, including the United States.... Most of the 586 people groups that do not speak English in the United States have [IMB] strategy coordinators working overseas with the same groups. With geographical limitations removed, a new synergy can be created in international missions," Floyd added. "We believe that with this bold and needed change, we are positioning our convention of churches for a major evangelistic harvest,"

(See GCR, page 2)

Baptists gear for Chile earthquake response

CONCEPCION, Chile (BP and local reports) — Southern Baptists have released \$50,000 for immediate relief needs in Chile, where the death toll has climbed past 700 in an earthquake disaster described by the country's president as "without parallel in Chile's history."

A Southern Baptist assessment team is en route to the country for dialogue with ministry partners about needs and on-the-ground evaluation of the damage caused by the 8.8-magnitude earthquake that struck in the pre-dawn hours of Feb. 27.

"We are confronting an emergency without parallel in Chile's history," Chile President Michelle Bachelet told reporters Feb. 28. In addition to the 700 people known to have died in the quake, an estimated 500,000 homes were destroyed or badly damaged. Some towns on Chile's coastline were destroyed when a tsunami wave swept in after the quake.

"A total of more than two million people have been affected by the earthquake," Bachelet said. Rescue crews are searching for survivors in the rubble of toppled buildings.

"Southern Baptist missionary personnel stationed in Chile began assessing the situation almost immediately after the quake," said Terry Lassiter, the International Mission Board (IMB) strategist for the American Peoples affinity group.

"An initial assessment team made up of missionaries already in Chile has begun evaluating conditions and needs," Lassiter said. "Other personnel are trying to find routes to return to the country. Pray that they will make it."

The airport in the capital of Santiago was closed in the immediate aftermath of the

earthquake but has resumed some degree of service, according to news reports. Roads and bridges in the country, however, have been destroyed or badly damaged, which will complicate transportation of relief supplies and workers.

"It was a terrifying experience," said Phil Brown, a Southern Baptist missionary who lives in Santiago. "We were awakened by our bed shaking so hard it almost threw us out. We live in a second floor apartment but ran to our outdoor terrace, ready to jump if the building started coming apart, which we feared it would."

"After the longest 90 seconds of my life, the shaking stopped. We got outside as quickly as we could to huddle in the street with the other people in our building." God was gracious in protecting all of our missionary family here. Hours have passed now but we are still jumpy. Each tremor now gets our full attention."

Baptist Global Response (BGR) has dispatched a four-member assessment team to Chile that is expected to assemble March 2 and start compiling information to help them determine the short-term and long-term response needed from Southern Baptists, said Jim Brown, director of BGR's U.S. office.

The assessment effort is being led by Charles Clark, the IMB cluster strategy leader for the area. Also serving on the team are representatives of the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief Network from the state conventions of Texas and South Carolina.



DOWN TO THE GROUND — Residents survey damage from the 8.8-magnitude earthquake that struck central Chile on Feb. 27. The quake hit 200 miles southwest of the capital, Santiago, and the epicenter was just 70 miles from Concepcion, Chile's second-largest city. The death toll continues to mount and now stands at more than 700. (BP photo courtesy of IMB/Genesis Photos)

"The \$50,000 released from the Southern Baptist disaster relief fund will be used to help local Baptist churches meet crisis needs like food, water, blankets, and shelter," Brown said. When donations are made to Southern Baptist disaster relief and world hunger funds, 100% of each donation goes to meet human needs. Nothing is withheld for administrative costs.

Southern Baptist personnel who were in the quake zone are struggling emotionally and physically, just like the Chileans around them, Lassiter said. "Many of our people are physically and emotionally exhausted. Those who live in high-rise apartment buildings told me they didn't think they were going to survive."

The 90 or so aftershocks that have occurred are continual

reminders of the horror everyone felt during the event itself."

Prayer partners should focus not only on people's immediate physical needs but also on the emotional and spiritual dimensions of the crisis, Lassiter added. "Please pray Philippians 4:7 for them: 'And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus,'" he said.

The Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force is located in the Men's Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. For more information on the Haiti and Chile earthquakes disaster relief response, contact the department at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3334 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 334. E-mail: cwright@mbcb.org.

Haitian judge delays release in disputed kidnapping case

PORT-AU-PRINCE (BP and local reports) — The Haiti judge overseeing the case of two jailed Baptist volunteers said Thursday the women won't be released this week and that he wants to obtain more testimony from others.

The news comes two days after the judge told Reuters the women — Laura Silsby and Charisa Coulter — could be freed this week and that he had not found any wrongdoing. That still may happen, but apparently not this week.

The Associated Press (AP) Thursday quoted Judge Bernard Saint-Vil as saying he wants to, in the words of AP, ask "two real estate agents and a pastor from the Dominican Republic to testify in Port-au-Prince about property" the women "rented to set up an orphanage." He also wants to ask questions of a pastor "and another man" from a border town, AP reported. Saint-Vil said he expects to rule on the case next week.

The judge told Reuters on Tuesday, "We haven't found anything that could suggest wrongdoing on the part of the Americans" and that "they could be released this week."

Silsby and Coulter are members of Central Valley Church, a Southern Baptist church in Meridian, Idaho. They and eight other Baptist volunteers from Idaho and Texas were arrested on Jan. 29 on charges of child kidnapping and criminal association when they tried to take 33 children out of the earthquake-ravaged country and to a makeshift orphanage in the Dominican Republic.

They allegedly did not have the proper paperwork. Silsby and the others have said they simply were trying to help the children.

The other eight team members were released from jail on Feb. 18 and are back in the United States, subject to recall if Haitian authorities determine they need more

information from them. Saint-Vil kept Silsby and Coulter in jail because he had further questions for them.

The freed group members are Carla Thompson and Nicole and Corinna Lankford of Central Valley Church; Paul Thompson, his son Silas, and

Steve McMullen of Eastside Church in Twin Falls, Idaho; Jim Allen of Paramount Church in Amarillo, Texas; and Drew Culbreth of Bethel Church in Topeka, Kan.

Bethel Church is the only church not affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

Looking back

10 years ago

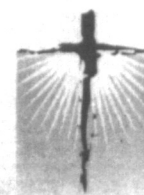
Dozens of people, including a Baptist seminary student, are killed when riots between Christians and Muslims broke out Feb. 21 in Kaduna, Nigeria. Seminary classrooms, the administration building, and a chapel were all burned.

20 years ago

Baptisms in overseas churches related to Southern Baptist foreign missions work increased 14.9% last year, reversing a three year decline. Overseas churches baptized 227,437 new believers in 1989, an average of one baptism every two minutes somewhere in the world.

50 years ago

The first statewide Sunday School convention since 1956 is scheduled for First Church, Meridian, March 14 - 16, with 1,000 expected to be in attendance.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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**YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!**

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



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Abortion's nasty little secrets

If the Memorial to the Missing outside the Baptist Building in Jackson proves anything, it proves that Mississippi Baptists don't just dislike legalized abortion, they despise it. Else, why would they fill the huge, reinforced container with 50 million pennies, each representing an aborted baby in the U.S. since the ghastly procedure was legalized by the country's Supreme Court.

It's little wonder decent people find abortion so deplorable. In addition to the horror of babies being ripped from their mothers' bodies, abortion clinic operators and doctors tend to be the bottom feeders of the medical profession. In Jackson alone, one abortion doctor was arrested for his sexual attraction to infants and their soiled diapers. Another had his license suspended in a neighboring state for poor medical practices while at the same time being investigated for tax problems.

Baptist Press recently published a revealing article on the dangerous shortcomings of abortion clinics across the country:

- State authorities suspended the medical license of Kermit Gosnell on Feb. 22 after two raids in four days of his West Philadelphia office, according to *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

Conditions at the clinic were "deplorable and unsanitary," the suspension order said. "There was blood on the floor, and parts of aborted fetuses were displayed in jars."

Philadelphia's CBS-TV affiliate reported investigators found the bodies of more than two dozen unborn babies stored in a freezer. Some were 30 years old, according to the TV station.

- A California judge on Feb. 18 rejected an attempt by state officials to have Andrew

Rutland's medical license suspended. On Jan. 7, Administrative Law Judge James Ahler ordered Rutland to stop performing abortions. The Medical Board of California charged Rutland with violating the judge's order after it conducted an undercover investigation. *The Los Angeles Times* reported.

Ahler ruled, however, that Rutland followed his order by refusing to perform a surgical abortion, though he encouraged the clandestine investigator to have a chemical, or drug-induced, abortion, according to *The Times*.

Rutland still has to face a disciplinary hearing as a result of the August death of Ying Chen, 30, during a second-trimester abortion at a San Gabriel, Calif., clinic.

- New York abortion clinic owner Salomon Epstein is being investigated by the state, according to a Feb. 23 release by Operation Rescue. The pro-life organization said it was notified by the Department of Health of the investigation into Epstein's part in the Jan. 25 death of Alexandra Nunez.

The mother of four died after she was injured during an abortion at a Queens clinic owned by Epstein, the *New York Daily News* reported. One of her arteries was accidentally cut, and Nunez went into cardiac arrest, police sources told the newspaper.

Operation Rescue President Troy Newman said of Epstein's clinic, "Just one look at the A-1 Women's Center and it is easy to guess why this happened. I wouldn't take my dog there. Nasty little abortion clinics like this spring up in Hispanic and black neighborhoods in order to prey on vulnerable women instead of offering them real solutions and hope."

Meanwhile, a hidden-camera investigation has shown another Planned Parenthood abortion clinic attempting to cover up child sexual abuse.

Live Action, a student-led, pro-life group, Feb. 23 released a new video showing a Planned Parenthood employee at a Milwaukee, Wis., clinic directing an alleged, 14-year-old girl to hide her boyfriend's age in seeking to obtain an abortion.

The employee, who identifies herself as Sonia, is caught on the secretly recorded video telling a young woman posing as a pregnant 14 year old, "You don't have to say anything" about her supposed boyfriend's age, which she says is 31. Sonia is heard saying the chance of a report to public officials by a clinic worker "depends on the person you're disclosing that information to."

Hidden-camera investigations by Live Action have caught Planned Parenthood employees in Alabama, Arizona, California, Indiana, and Tennessee seeking to cover up alleged child sexual abuse, prompting some state investigations. Undercover video released in December showed a counselor at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Appleton, Wis., providing erroneous information about fetal development.

"In case after case, Planned Parenthood exempts itself from its legal and professional obligations," said Lila Rose, Live Action's president, in a written statement.

The latest Live Action video is available online at <http://www.liveaction.org>.

Affiliates of Planned Parenthood, the country's leading abortion provider, performed more than 305,000 abortions in 2007, the most recent year for which statistics are available.

These stories have been reported for years. Abortion is a dirty business run by dirty people, and we wouldn't put up with this type of behavior from any other type of business. What makes the baby killers so special? Maybe that's a question we should ask our politicians — and especially our judges — when they next seek our votes.

GCR (continued from page one)

a discipleship revolution and an unprecedented, exponential explosion in church planting."

- Moving the primary responsibility for Cooperative Program promotion and stewardship education ministry assignments from the Executive Committee to the state conventions. Historically, promotion of the Cooperative Program was seen as the responsibility of the state conventions, Floyd said. The task force's plan envisions state convention leaders creating a consortium that, in cooperation with the president and CEO of the Executive Committee, would "plan and execute an annual strategy that will promote the Cooperative Program to our churches as well as challenge our churches in biblical stewardship." While the plan envisions state conventions reassuming the stewardship assignment, "it is the responsibility of local churches to challenge their people to walk in obedience to God by honoring Him weekly with at least the first tenth of all income as well as additional offerings to our local churches," Floyd said.

- Reaffirming the Cooperative Program "as our

central means of supporting Great Commission ministries" and establishing a broader category of "Great Commission Giving" to celebrate all the financial support — CP giving and designated giving — local congregations provide for Southern Baptist missions. "We are not recommending any changes to the Cooperative Program but are reaffirming it as our central means of supporting the Great Commission ministries of the Southern Baptist Convention," Floyd said, saying the task force calls upon every church "to work diligently at giving more through the Cooperative Program." At the same time, however, "we also believe our local associations, state conventions and national entities should celebrate whatever amount a church gives through the Cooperative Program. In the spirit of one of our desired core values, which is unity, we need to work together in love for the sake of the Gospel."

- Raising the percentage of Cooperative Program funds received by the International Mission Board in the 2011-2012 budget year to 51 percent and funding the increase in part with monies previously

allocated to the SBC Executive Committee for Cooperative Program promotion and stewardship education. The proposal would reduce the SBC Operating Budget allocation of 3.40% by one percentage point, or roughly two million dollars, and add it to the IMB's budget, currently at nearly \$320 million. Calling the proposal "both symbolic and substantial," Floyd said, "This means that for the first time in our history, more than one-half of all monies that come from our churches through the SBC Cooperative Program will go to the reaching of the nations... We believe this is a great move forward and we need to do all we can to reach the nations."

'Watershed moment'

The task force will release its final report May 3, in anticipation of presenting it to messengers to the SBC's June 15-16 annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., Floyd said. In the meantime, he said, Southern Baptists must individually and corporately turn to God. "[W]e know our greatest need is for a mighty spiritual revival to sweep through our churches across this nation. We

must repent of our sins and return to God in order to see this great movement of God," Floyd said. "As we near the coming of our Lord Jesus, we want all of our strategies to position us to be a part of this coming great Gospel harvest."

"We believe this vision we are unfolding to you tonight provides major momentum for the continuation of this Great Commission Resurgence movement and vision," he said. "However, a real, long-lasting Great Commission Resurgence must happen personally, as well as in our churches, and in all of our Southern Baptist local associations, state conventions and national entities."

The Orlando meeting "can become a watershed moment for the reaching of the nations," Floyd concluded. "May/June 15-16, 2010, be the moment that will define the future for generations to come and show that Southern Baptists are a unified people, Bible-based, Gospel-centered and set on fire by the Holy Spirit, believing we must join together like never before in presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world and to make disciples of all the nations."

Bivo music course offered at six Mississippi locations

JACKSON (Special) — The Music Leadership Training School will begin the fourth of eight courses at six locations in Mississippi sponsored by the Church Music Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in cooperation with Providence Learning Center of New Orleans Seminary.

Reading Music: Harmony/Melody will meet once a week for two hours for eight consecutive weeks at the following locations and times:

- First Church, Booneville,

beginning March 23 (6:30-8:30 p.m.) LuAnne Ford, teacher. (662) 728-6272.

- First Church, Greenwood, beginning March 23 (6:30-8:30 p.m.) Barry Bouchillon, teacher. (662) 897-3075.

- Broadmoor Church, Madison, beginning March 22 (6:00-8:00 p.m.) Jimmy McCaleb, teacher. (601) 924-1233.

- Northcrest Church, Meridian, beginning March 8 (6:30-8:30 p.m.) Buddy McElroy, teacher. (601) 938-8668.

- Easthaven Church, Brookhaven, beginning March 29 (7-9 p.m.) Mark Hamilton, teacher. (601) 894-5848.

- First Church, Lyman, beginning March 16 (7-9 p.m.) Louis White, teacher. (228) 832-2159.

The eight courses in the cycle are: Song Leading; Worship Planning; Reading Music: Rhythm/Pitch; Reading Music: Harmony/Melody; Hymnology; Music Administration/Staff Relations; Survey of Church Music

Resources; and Class Voice.

The courses are designed to provide basic training for bivocational music directors and other music leaders in churches. The cycle of courses is scheduled over a two-year period. Each course is independent and has no prerequisite. Each student who com-

pletes the eight courses earns a certificate from Providence Learning Center.

There is a one-time enrollment fee of \$25.00. The cost of each course is \$125.00. A \$60.00 scholarship is available for all first-time students. Students already enrolled are not eligible. The grant is lim-

ited to one person per church.

For more information, contact the teachers listed above or contact Jimmy McCaleb, MBCB Church Music Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3273 or toll-free outside Jackson (800-748) 1651, ext. 273. E-mail: mccaleb@cabinview.net.

Three more Christians murdered in Iraq

WASHINGTON (BP) — Violence against Christians in northern Iraq continues to intensify as the country's March 7 parliamentary elections draw closer.

A Christian man and his two sons were murdered on Feb. 23 in Mosul when armed gunmen stormed their home, news services reported. Eight Christians have been killed in the city in the past two weeks.

The violence is worsening the flight of Iraqi Christians from the country, said Emil Shimoun Nona, the Chaldean archbishop of Mosul, according to news reports.

"It is very difficult to live in this kind of situation," Nona said. "It is panic, panic always. The Christians don't know what will happen to them. It is the same everywhere — in the office, at school, or even at home. They don't know if somebody is going to kill them."

Nona succeeded Paulos Faraj Rahho, who was kidnapped and murdered in March 2008.

While Iraq in general has grown more peace-

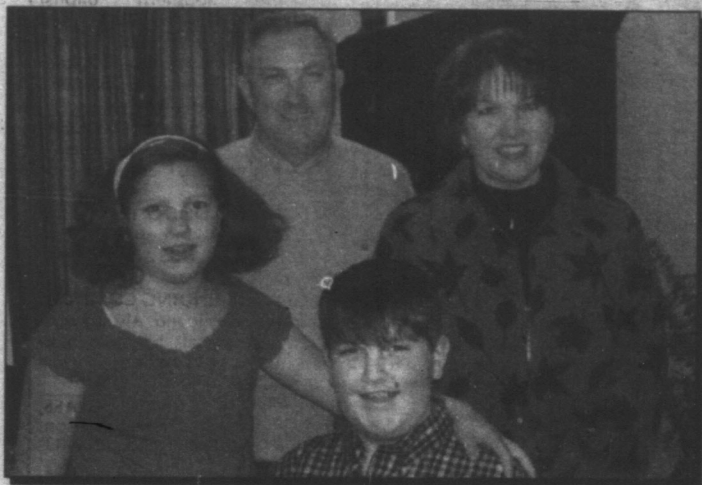
ful over the past two years, violence is an almost daily occurrence in Mosul, where Arabs, Kurds, and al-Qaeda extremists are fighting for control. The country's minority Christian community often is targeted by the factions, perhaps by Kurds or Arabs who want to intimidate them from voting or by al-Qaeda militants who want to derail the March 7 election. Iraqi law reserves a small quota of seats in parliament for Christians.

More than 40% of all Iraqi refugees are Christians, even though they made up less than four percent of the population, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Iraq's Chaldean Assyrians, who are the country's indigenous people, numbered about one million when Saddam Hussein was deposed in 2003, according to the U.S. Department of State.

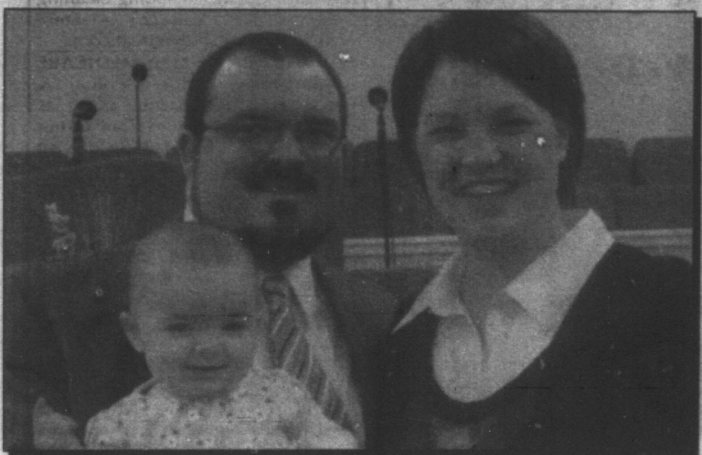
An estimated 400,000 Christians have been forced to flee the country since then, and many of the approximately 600,000 Christians remaining in Iraq are internally displaced.

STAFF CHANGES

1. **Oak Hill Church, Meridian**, recently called Dwain Rogers as minister of music.
2. **Noxapater Church, Noxapater**, has called Trent Bilbo as pastor. Shown are Bilbo, his wife Renee, daughter Lydia, and son Nathan.
3. **Pleasant Valley Church, Mendenhall**, has called Adam Wyatt as pastor. Shown are Wyatt, his wife Larzée, and daughter Abigail.



2. The Bilbos



3. The Wyatts

JUST FOR THE RECORD

1. Bricks are being sold in honor of and in memory of any veterans by **New Zion Church, Braxton**, with the bricks to be used in a memorial walkway. Bricks are \$50, with the veteran's name and branch of service engraved on the brick. Orders are due by Apr. 15. For information, call (601) 847-2822.



3. First Church, Ripley

2. **Bayou View Church, Gulfport**, is hosting a marriage conference Mar. 26-28 with a showing of the movie, *Fireproof*, on Friday; a Saturday seminar, *God on Marriage and Family*, presented by Daniel L. Akin, and the Sunday morning message by Akin.

3. The WMU of **First Church, Ripley**, made 171 dresses for the Children Hemmed in Prayer Ministry. The dresses will be given to children around the world by missionaries and mission teams. Shown are the participants.



4. Robinhood Church, Brandon

4. **Robinhood Church, Brandon**, recently ordained three new deacons. Shown are Ronnie Short, deacon chairman Tommy Henry, Charles Long, Wayne Wallace, and pastor Sam Taylor. Shown are the deacons and pastor.

KEEP MOVING

Recently, I had an experience that stopped me in my tracks. I was attending a meeting and staying in a large hotel that had an extremely large revolving door. Rather than being one of those revolving doors where you walk up and push and it goes around, it was automatic. When you walked in, it started turning, and you simply kept moving. It should have worked that way, except I ran into a problem. Halfway through the rotation that would get me out, the door came to a screeching halt. There I was stopped in my tracks and going nowhere. Then a voice came out of the sky to all of us who were in the door. It was a lady's voice that was very gentle and yet very authoritative which said, "Keep moving!" Well, I had stopped because the door stopped.

There I stood, neither in nor out and nowhere to go. The problem was if someone came into the revolving door section, stopped, and did not keep moving the entire door would stop turning. In the part of the door behind me, there was a man who had created the problem. In the center part of the door there was a model of a golf course green and he wanted to look at it, and so he came into the door as it was moving and stopped to stare at the golf green. Six or eight other people were forced to stop moving because he had stopped. Thank goodness the lady, whoever she was, automatically came on the speakers and got us all back on track. The door started to move again. Relieved to get outside and to move on to where I was supposed to be, I thought to myself that is just like going to church. Think about it as I reflect on some lessons I learned in the revolving door that stopped revolving.

The first lesson that came to my mind was that the door was made for moving. That being said, if you are not going to move then don't get in the door. When Jesus spoke to His disciples and said, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18), He was describing the church as being a mighty rock or stone against which this world would come crashing. He described the church as a mighty army

marching forward, unstoppable, and unshakable. Yet at times, the church takes on a bunker mentality and acts as though God has called us to hunker down and cower in some safe shelter to cringe, shake, and barely move.

No, no, that is not us! The church is made to move into a world that is hurting and to move into the darkness to bring light. Jesus has called us to move into the excitement of the uncertain tomorrows holding on to the certainties of our living, triumphant Lord. The Bible describes the people of God as being living stones. We are not stones or chunks of granite like you would find in a cemetery. We are supposed to be stones that have been brought to life by the energy and the transforming power of our God. Often you see churches that have stopped moving on their mission for Jesus and they sit paralyzed, going nowhere, and stopped in their tracks. The loving and strong voice of our Lord comes through. He says, "Follow Me!" It is time that we say yes to Him.

The second lesson that I learned in that revolving door was that one person can stop a whole lot of other people. It is pretty amazing to watch how this works in a group of people and especially in church folks. A group of people on mission with Jesus can be so excited about some opportunity, some activity, or some mission for and with Jesus, and one single voice, one person can lock his or her heels and like with the revolving door, it stops and everybody ceases to move.

In the New Testament, it is interesting to see in John 21 where one man who had come out of the fishing trade to follow Jesus announces, "I

go a fishing!" Whether for just a moment or for a recommitment to going back to his earlier life, he heads off to the fishing boats and one by one the other disciples said, "We will go with you." One man stopped moving forward with Jesus and the rest of them said, "We will stop following Him too." It is nearly always that way when someone stops moving forward with Jesus. Backsliders — disobedient disciples — can always cast a chill on a group of folks moving forward for Jesus.

The third lesson that I learned was that when one person gets straightened out it enables everyone to advance, to move forward again. When the lady said, "Keep moving," the guy who was just standing there reacted, responded, and started moving. Of course, the result was that the rest of us started moving and the reason for our being in that place was fulfilled. We moved ahead. While one person could cause many to stop, one person with a right heart and a redirected life can get everyone moving again. It is more than just a thought or an observation. I have observed a spiritual truth through the years. Often a spiritual awakening, a work of God in a church, or a renewed energy to do the Lord's work hinges on one person responding to His voice to keep moving. Get your heart in gear, your feet in place, and let the Lord take you where He wants you to be and do what He wants you to do.

Many of you who read this might be like me and think that you do not have any influence over anyone else. Your life moving in the will of God will not make any impact on anyone else. You think

that you cannot be the spark that ignites some great work of God. Well, that is not for you to determine and often you may not even be aware of what God is doing. Here is the deciding issue: Am I moving where God wants me to move? Am I doing what He wants me to do? Have I become the reason why the door came to a stop and why the church has failed to continue moving forward?

What is our responsibility? We are to listen to His voice and do what He has asked us to do. Everything else will come together and everyone else can be encouraged to move forward also.

The author can be contacted at jfutal@mbcb.org.

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UEQ YLO DITMSLP
NTIPL LOI NAIYPTIE
YTE, UEQ HIUWQOQ
LAG AE YHUQCAES
VCTPLOY, UEQ CUAQ
LAG AE U GUESOI;
DOVUMYO PLOIO HUY
ET ITTG NTI PLOG AE
PLO AEE

CMBO PHT: YOZOE

Clue: C = L

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Titus Two: Eleven

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



12. Moak's Creek Church, Summit



13. The Hawkins



14. Roberts and Wright



15. Branch Church, Morton

12. Moak's Creek Church, Summit, recognized Willie A. Hodges for 52 years of service as deacon. Shown are Louise Hodges, Hodges, and pastor Mike Alexander.

13. First Church, Nettleton, held its Valentine Banquet Feb. 14. Mr. and Mrs. Billy Hawkins were crowned king and queen in honor of their 59 years of marriage. Shown are the Hawkins.

14. Alcus Roberts, Morgantown Church, Natchez, is shown receiving a certificate for reading through the Bible in 2009. This is the 13th consecutive year Roberts has completed this task. Shown are Roberts and pastor Ed Wright.

15. The GAs and RAs of Branch Church, Morton, recently visited the Ronald McDonald House in Jackson, making and delivering care packages to the residents. Shown are the participants.

16. The children of First Church, Plantersville, held a Valentine's Banquet recently. Shown are the participants.

17. A mission team from Central Church, McComb, is providing about 300 handmade dolls to be given to the Navaho children, Gallup, New Mexico. The team of about 25 is sponsored by the Pike Association. Shown are Shari Mancuso, Jerry Van, Lynn Wells, and pastor Randall Griffin.

18. First Church, Byhalia, honored John B. Going with a plaque for serving 49 years as church treasurer. Shown are Waurene Going and Going.

19. Calvary Church, Mt. Olive, will be having their church dedication Apr. 25, 10 a.m., followed by noon lunch, special music, and guest speakers.

20. Glendale Church, Glen, is hosting a women's conference Apr. 3 featuring Rita Sweatt. The conference begins at 8 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m. Cost, \$12 pre-registration; \$15 at the door. Includes lunch. For information, call (662) 287-8456 or 286-6349.

21. Pinelake Church, Brandon, is hosting Beth Moore's So

Long Insecurity Conference Apr. 24, 9 a.m., via simulcast at the church's Reservoir campus. Tickets are \$15, including lunch, and are available at The Source bookstore at the church's campus, online at www.thesourceat-pinelake.org, or at LifeWay Christian Bookstore, Jackson. For more information call the church at (601) 829-4500 or visit www.pinelake.org/bethmoore.

22. Shelton Church, Moselle, is celebrating the completion of its new educational building with a dedication service Mar. 7, 9 a.m.

23. First Church, Morton, is hosting a churchwide garage sale Mar. 6, 7 a.m. - noon, with proceeds going toward their youth mission trip to Canada in 2011. Chicken plates will be available.

24. Mt. Zion Church, Rankin County, will host the Chuck Wagon Gang in concert Mar. 7, 6 p.m. A love offering will be received.

25. West End Church, West Point, will present the Easter drama and musical I'm Forgiven Apr. 2, 7 p.m., and Apr. 4, 10 a.m.



16. First Church, Plantersville



17. Central Church, McComb

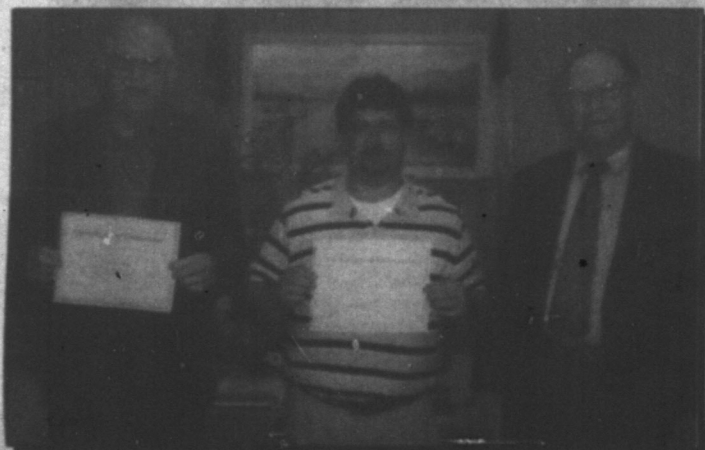


18. The Goings

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Hollandale Church, Hollandale



2. Dry Creek Church, Preston



3. Beulah Church, Newton County



4. Pulaski Church, Pulaski

1. **Hollandale Church, Hollandale**, held a ladies' Valentine brunch. Shown are the participants.

2. **Dry Creek Church, Preston**, ordained Lowell Goodin and Steve Triplett as deacons Jan. 17. Shown are Lowell Goodin, Steve Triplett, and pastor Vernell Daniels.

3. **Beulah Church, Newton County**, recognized those with perfect attendance in Sunday School. Shown are Neal Motley, 40 years; Laverne Chaney, 32 years; Will Motley, 32 years; Barbara Harrison, 27 years; and Elton Bryan, 16 years.

4. **Pulaski Church, Pulaski**, presented Away in A Manger Dec. 20. Shown, front row, are Ben Kelly, Blake Kelly, and Brittany Kelly; center row, J.C. Powell, Faith Breland, and Maysen Cockcroft; back row, Presley Cockcroft and Madysen Warren.

5. Retired pastor **Thomas Jewell Wood**, a Tylertown native now of Meridian, has published a book on salvation entitled *God's Encounter with Man, or Divine Encounter* (Crossbooks Publishing). Wood, 86, is currently pastor emeritus at Briarwood Church, Meridian. The book sells for \$12 and is available at Tylertown Church (601-876-4211), New Zion Church, Walthall County, (876-3248), or mail \$12 to Wood at 293 Driftwood Dr., Meridan, MS 39305.

6. **First Church, Sardis**, celebrated their 165th anniversary Nov. 7-8, with activities including a carnival, banquet, music, skits, and special worship services. Shown is the Pearl Quartet.

7. The 5th grade GAs of **Fairview Church, Columbus**, made dolls to send girls in Haiti. The dolls have salvation necklaces on that missionaries can use to share Christ. Shown are the participants.

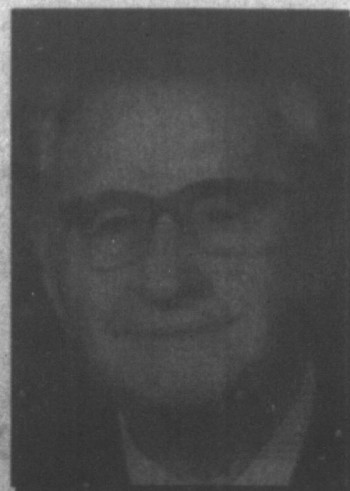
8. The Timeless Treasures of **Holcomb Church, Grenada County**, presented stuffed animals to the Grenada Lake Medical Center - Pediatric Department on Feb. 4. Shown are the participants.

9. **Calvary Church, New Augusta**, will host its annual Turner Memorial Day service Mar. 14.

10. **Hillcrest Church, New**

Albany, is hosting a ladies' conference Mar. 26-27 featuring Kay DeKalb Smith. Tickets, \$10 through Mar. 24; \$15 at the door. Tickets can be purchased at the Union County Association office, or for more information, call (662) 534-3940.

11. **The Witnessing Through Media Awards Banquet and Workshops** will be held May 7-8 at Colonial Heights Church, Ridgeland. Deadline for entry is Mar. 5. For more information, call Ian Richardson at (601) 292-3378 or toll free outside Jackson at (800) 748-1651, ext. 378.



5. Wood



6. First Church, Sardis



7. Fairview Church, Columbus



8. Holcomb Church, Grenada County

Land pleads for America's future, points to judgment

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — God is willing to bring revival in America, but Christians must repent and return to Him, Southern Baptist ethicist Richard Land said at an In God We Trust Conference hosted by Grove Avenue Church in Richmond, Va.

"[T]here's nothing in my Bible that says that we can't have another revival," Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville, told attendees. "There's nothing in my Bible that says we can't have another awakening. There's nothing in my Bible that says we can't have another reformation."

"The good news is, whether America has a future worth happening doesn't depend on the lost people. It depends on what the saved people do."

Land noted, "All great movements of God start with God's people getting right with God, and when God's people get right with God, lost people notice."

"When saved men are loving their wives as Christ loved the church, people notice. When we're loving our neighbors as ourselves, lost people notice, and they want to know what's happened to us, and as we explain it to them, lost people start getting saved, and that's called an awakening, and when the saved peo-

ple who have been revived and the lost people who have been saved apply the truths of Scripture to the evils in their society, you have a reformation, and that's what we must have."

The United States "is at a fork in the road," Land said, "and it is not a fork in the road that goes left or right. It is a fork in the road that goes up or down... We have God-sized problems that only God can solve."

"These problems such as abortion, fatherless families, and the divorce rate among Christians, have occurred despite growth in the evangelical church," he said.

"We have seen over the last 40 years an unprecedented upsurge in evangelical Christianity and with it a decline in the morals of the nation. That seems incongruous," he said.

"I would put it to you that by every measure we could take, there are more born-again Christians — people who understand what it means to believe in Jesus Christ the resurrected Savior as their personal Savior and they're trusting Him and Him alone for salvation — than at any time in my lifetime, and yet our society has gone down in virtually every moral area I can think of but two," he said, citing racism and sexism as the exceptions.

In reviewing what has happened over the last four decades, Land said, "...we have to come to the conclusion that instead of being salt and light, we have been salted and lit. Society has influenced us more than we've influenced society."

Land told conference participants, "The most dangerous place an American has ever been was in his mother's womb between 1973 and today. There's a 33% fatality rate, and let's be honest, it couldn't have continued without at least the acquiescence of born-again Christians. There are too many of us."

"What's happened to America over the last 40 years could not have happened if the pulpits of the nation were aflame with the fire of the righteousness of God."

After speaking on 2 Chronicles 7:14 Feb. 13, Land offered "God's roadmap for a person, for a family, for a church, for a community, for a country that finds itself far from God."

Preaching from Jeremiah, chapters 2 through 5, Land said Christians must "remember what it was like when it was right between God and His people," "realize when it's not that way anymore," return "to the foot of the cross," repent and experience reconciliation, or "reckon on the judgment that will come."



ABORTION PROTEST — Richard Land (left), president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville, speaks with Laura Allred (center) and her mother Emily Zavala during a recent prayer and protest rally in Houston, Texas, over what organizers say will be the nation's largest abortion clinic. Allred is founder and director of Captured, a ministry to young women, especially minorities, the largest demographic group having abortions. (BP photo)

"If God will send the Jews into a Babylonian captivity, He will judge America," Land said. "I believe we have seen some of that judgment, but it is but a harbinger. It is but a warning. It is but a mere shadow of that which will come" if Christians do not return to God.

"The good news is there is returning. There is repentance. There is reconciliation," he said.

Other speakers at the conference, a ministry of Grove Avenue Church, were David Barton, president of Wall Builders; and Craig Parshall, senior vice president for the National Religious Broadcasters.

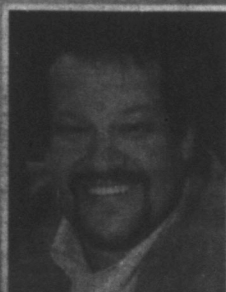
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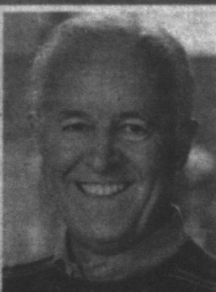
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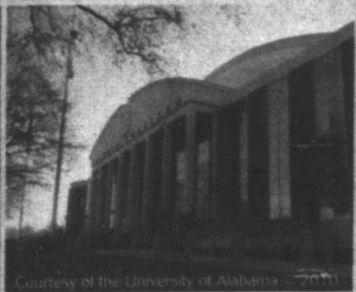
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'Constitutional conservatism' seen as uniting branches

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (BP) — A coalition of leading conservatives has unveiled a document promoting a "constitutional conservatism" and affirming the three legs of the movement: social, economic and national security conservatives.

The Mount Vernon Statement, released at a news conference on Feb. 17 at the Collingwood Library and Museum in Alexandria, Va. — land once owned by George Washington — was modeled after the 1960 Sharon Statement, which was released 40 years ago and spearheaded by the late conservative leader William F. Buckley.

The Mount Vernon Statement was signed by, among others, Richard Land and Barrett Duke of the

Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), Kathryn J. Lopez of National Review, Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council, Grover Norquist of Americans for Tax Reform, Edwin Feulner of the Heritage Foundation, and Ed Meese, attorney general under President Reagan.

A complete list of signees is available at www.themountvernonstatement.com.

"A Constitutional conservatism unites all conservatives through the natural fusion provided by American principles," according to the document, which points continually to the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. "It reminds economic conservatives that

morality is essential to limited government, social conservatives that unlimited government is a threat to moral self-government, and national security conservatives that energetic but responsible government is the key to America's safety and leadership role in the world."

A Constitutional conservatism "based on first principles" supports social, economic, and national security conservatism, the document contends.

Land, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, applauded the Mount Vernon Statement.

"The Mt. Vernon Statement is a superb summary of the first principles that unite conservatives of various stripes in America," Land said. "It is important for conservatives to remind themselves, as well as the nation, where their first principles come from, namely our founding documents."

While different elements of the conservative movement may have differing emphases, we share these first principles. There is more that unites us than divides us."

The Mount Vernon Statement does not mention any political parties or politicians but it does criticize those who "insist that America must change" and "cast off the old and put on the new." During his campaign President Obama utilized the word "change" in speeches and commercials.

"Isn't this idea of change an empty promise or even a dangerous deception?" the document asks. "The change we urgently need, a change consistent with the American ideal, is not movement away from but toward our founding principles. At this important time, we need a restatement of Constitutional conservatism grounded in the

priceless principle of ordered liberty articulated in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution."

The document does not mention any of the hot button social issues such as abortion or same sex marriage but it does outline principles that could apply to those issues.

The document concludes by listing five ways in which a Constitutional conservatism "based on first principles" leads to a "consistent and meaningful policy agenda":

- "It applies the principle of limited government based on the rule of law to every proposal."

- "It honors the central place of individual liberty in American politics and life."

- "It encourages free enterprise, the individual entrepreneur, and economic reforms grounded in market solutions."

- "It supports America's national interest in advancing freedom and opposing tyranny in the world and prudently considers what we can and should do to that end."

- "It informs conservatism's firm defense of family, neighborhood, community, and faith."

COLLEGE NEWS

1. The William Carey University Chorale will perform in concert March 7 at 6 p.m. at the First Church of Columbia. The primary choral organization on campus, the Chorale is directed by dean of the Winters School of Music Mark Malone. Kathy Vail, associate professor of music is organist and pianist. Carpenter's Wood, a contemporary Christian group directed by Vail, will perform works featuring several student soloists. WCU will host a reception following the concert in the fellowship hall. The public is invited to the concert and reception admission free. For more information call (601) 318-6192.
2. William Carey University elementary education major Jeremy Sanford of Seminary was one of 138 nominees for the national Heart of Marin Volunteer of the Year Award and as a nominee was recognized at an awards luncheon in San Rafael, California recently. An honorably discharged disabled veteran, Sanford served four years in the Army before being discharged in 2008. He was nominated for his exemplary service for the Heart of Marin by Veterans2Work, an organization that finds quality employment for disabled veterans.
3. More than 100 singers from Blue Mountain College, Itawamba Community College and Northeast Mississippi Community College will present an evening of music at Calvary Church in Tupelo on March 8 and at First United Methodist Church in Corinth on March 9. Both community programs are free and will begin at 7 p.m. The hour-long program will consist of songs by such composers as Ludwig van Beethoven, Ralph Vaughan Williams, John Rutter, Aaron Copeland and many others.
4. William Carey University offers a wide variety of topics on which qualified faculty and staff give presentations as part of the 2009-2010 Speaker's Bureau. A wide variety of topics are offered including business, sports, health, psychology and gerontology, religion, humor, art conservation and preservation, after dinner speaking, osteopathic medicine, education, history and communication. For a detailed list of specific topics visit the Speaker's Bureau at www.wmcarey.edu. Group visits to Lucile Parker Art Gallery, Sarah Ellen Museum of Art, and the museum which features the life and work of William Carey, namesake of the university, can also be arranged. Scheduling is done through each individual speaker and there is no charge for presentations. For more information call Barbara Hamilton at (601) 318-6524.

REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

1. Holly Springs Church, Brookhaven: Homecoming, Mar. 21; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m., followed by a business meeting and music by Gloryland; covered dish lunch.
2. East Fork Church, Smithdale: Revival, Mar. 7 - 10; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds and afternoon service; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Preston Nix, speaker; Timothy Freeny, music and pastor.
3. Port Gibson Church, Port Gibson: Revival, Mar. 7 - 10; Sun., 11 a.m.; Mon. - Wed., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Don Lum, speaker.
4. River Bend Church, Aberdeen: Revival, Mar. 7 - 10; Sun., 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; W.D. "Step" Martin, speaker; Price Harris, music; Roy McHenry, pastor.



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BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

When Members Won't Get Along

I Corinthians 1:10-15, 26-29, 3:1-4 (NIV)

By Marion D. Duncan

The 21st Winter Olympics held in February 2010 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, created an exciting precursor to the study of First Corinthians. At the time Paul was a missionary to the Gentiles in Corinth, the city was the site of the ancient Olympic Games, and the center of sports and entertainment — both very important aspects of the life of the Greeks. William Baird observes, "Jesus saw people as sheep without a shepherd; Paul saw them as athletes ready to run."

A flourishing seaport, Corinth was the center of commerce and industry, as well as the capital of the Roman province of Achaia. It was rebuilt and colonized by the Romans, soon followed by the

Greeks. Its ideal location attracted Jews and other people from all over the known world making it the most cosmopolitan city of its day. Slavery was a factor that brought many nationalities to Corinth making it a "melting pot" of people.

All the ancient religions were represented in Corinth—Greek gods and goddesses, Eastern mystery religions, the Egyptian religion of Isis, the immoral worship of Aphrodite, and the ideology of the Jews. The worship of Aphrodite had brought wealth and infamy to the old city and gained it the reputation of the most licentious city of its day.

From the description of the city of Corinth, we see many of the marks of urban culture true of cities of every age — including our own. When very large numbers of people

live close together in a cosmopolitan setting, social, economic, and moral problems of all kinds exist.

General MacArthur identified the problem in the church at Corinth and in many of our modern churches when he observed that our scientific and technological progress has far outstripped our progress in the art of living together as God intended.

A definition of the word "unity" is in order before looking at the focal passages in 1st Corinthians, chapter 1. Webster says unity is the quality or state of being one; oneness; a condition of harmony. (Isn't this the desired outcome of the Corinthian dissension?) From the King James Version, we understand unity to mean "perfectly joined together." These words remind me of the amazing product resulting from perfectly joined pieces of a zigsaw puzzle — no disruption in the whole, solidarity.

In his usual positive approach to the people of God, Paul writes his greetings and praises the church concerning the spiritual

gifts in their fellowship and the blessings from God. Then he states and addresses the existing problem of quarreling or dissension as told him by one in Chloe's household. He points to the inappropriateness of their quarreling by calling for admission from them about their loyalty and faithfulness. For example, "Is Christ divided?" "Was Paul crucified for you?" "Were you baptized in the name of Paul?" Paul adds, almost in parentheses, "I am thankful I did not baptize but a few of you!" His call was to preach the gospel, not to baptize. (1 Cor. 1:17.)

We might be so bold as to say, "What they did is absurd! We would never be guilty of such!" Wouldn't we? Ours may be other situations, but do we not see dissension in our churches over matters just as trivial? Perhaps our lack of unity involves who agreed with which preacher that preceded the one we have now. Maybe the disunity is over the way a decision to do something in your church was made. Or, it may be that you are not included in the decision-making—a per-

son or select group decides what is done according to their desires or opinions. These kinds of things do cause divisions among believers. The question is, "Are we willing to put church unity ahead of personal ambition?" The church is God's church, not that of any one person or group. Will we consent to reconciliation even when it means surrendering control and power?

Paul admonishes these Christians not to be proud, arrogant, or boastful about anything because they all came to Christ the same way, through His "righteousness, holiness, and redemption. . . Let him who boasts boast in the Lord." (1:30-31).

In 1st Corinthians 3:1-4, Paul chided them for their spiritual immaturity which manifested itself in envy and strife. He explains that he had to address them as worldly, not spiritual, because "you are still worldly, showing jealousy and quarreling." (3:3)

Duncan is a member of First Church, Starkville.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Compassionate Action.

Exodus 1:1-18:27

By Shelby Hazzard

God Takes Notice — Exodus 2:23-25

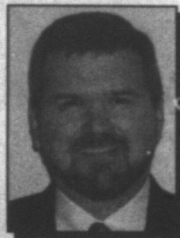
It was a new and different day in Egypt for the Israelites. When Joseph died, the favor of Pharaoh died with him and his generation of Israelites. The new Pharaoh, which was simply another name for king, was very paranoid about the increasing population of Israelites, for their race had become dominant within Egypt. Pharaoh mandated that the Egyptian midwives, when assisting the Hebrew women, kill all male babies. The midwives disobeyed this command, so Pharaoh expanded the infanticide to include all male children to be thrown into the Nile River.

God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them (Exodus 2:23-25, NIV). This passage is a great reminder that

regardless of how trivial or controversial our situation is, God hears our groans and prayers and will provide for our needs, even though the provision may not be what we expect or from whom we expect it.

God Discloses Himself — Exodus 3:1-6

As Moses is tending sheep near Mt. Horeb, also known as Mt. Sinai, in the south-central region of the Sinai Peninsula, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush that was not consumed by the fire. This angel is different than created angels, for the Lord himself is present in this angel. "This Angel suffers no reduction or adjustment of his full deity, yet he is in that mode of deity whereby the holy God can keep company with sinners. The only other person described in this way is Christ as He is both iden-



Hazzard

tical, yet distinct from the Lord. This Angel is most likely a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ (The Bible Speaks Today, J.A. Motyer, pg 50-51).

As God revealed his purpose to Moses at the burning bush, the Lord Jesus Christ has now revealed to us our purpose as those that are called to be Christians. Through Christ we are now partakers of the divine nature and share in the promises of God to Israel. We are commissioned to be ambassadors of reconciliation from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth.

God Takes Action — Exodus 3:7-10

Now God gives Moses instructions. God had heard the cry of his children in bondage and remembered His promise to them through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God would now move in power upon the earth to free them from their oppressor and bring them into the Land he had promised their forefathers, a

land flowing with milk and honey, the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites and Moses would be the man God had chosen to complete this task.

I doubt many of us that read the Baptist Record have personally experienced the type of prolonged bondage and infanticide that the Israelites did; however, that does not mean that we have not experienced true suffering in dire situations, nor does it mean that God looks upon one situation as more or less important than another. God is compassionate and caring for every believer in every situation.

God Works Wonders — Exodus 3:19-20

After God had instructed Moses in what to do, Moses questioned God. First, Moses questioned himself and whether God was certain he was the one for the task. Second, Moses was concerned about the name he was to call God if the Egyptians asked. God's first answer was that "he would be with him" and His second, he was to be called the great "I AM WHO I AM."

God then continued His instructions to Moses, telling him to go and assemble the elders and tell them the time had come for deliverance from their bondage and the fulfillment of the promise of the land flowing with milk and honey.

We know and believe that God is a God of power, miracles and wonders as He has said it and proved it time and time again. It is very important for us to remember that God always has been and will always be a God of insurmountable power and mercy. I can speak from my own experience with God as I have been a Christian for over fourteen years. In 1996 he delivered me from a lifestyle consumed in sin and rebellion against God and earthly authority. He stretched out his hand against me and by putting me through many life trials, convicted me of my sin through the Spirit's power and brought me to Godly sorrow, belief and faith in Jesus Christ.

Hazzard is minister of evangelism, First Church, Greenville.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, Microsoft attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

THE BAPTIST
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Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if

submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor with love and respect those who are and have been special to our special friends.

DECEMBER 23 - 31, 2009

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BCV Bi-Annual Alumni Reunion

The bi-annual reunion for The Baptist Children's Village Alumni is scheduled for Saturday, July 10, 2010. More details will be published in The Village View and posted on the BCV web site, Facebook fan page and at www.twitter.com/BCV as they become available. This is a great time to catch up with family and friends, so save the date and make plans to attend. If you would like to be added to the BCV Alumni mail list and receive registration information for the event, please email your contact information to ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com or call 601-922-2242.

Coast pastor uses personal touch, MLSMO to minister

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent

At hundreds of small churches across the nation, when the main phone number rings during the week there is no one to answer it. When you call the main number of West Bay Community Church in Waveland — the number listed on the Web site — you don't just get an answer.

You get Teaching Pastor Brian Bridges, on his cell phone, at the dress rehearsal of his daughters' school play. Bridges is serious about his church and community. It's personal.

"We really want to engage the people here and provide people with a real church family," he said.

When he, his wife Karen, and daughters Holly, 13, and Joni, 8, planted the church with the help of a few friends in January 2009, they did it the best way they knew how. They became family. They cooked hot dogs and invited the neighbors over.

They spruced up their new meeting place — the old First Church building, which has sat empty since the congregation dispersed after Hurricane Katrina. They spent hours pulling back overgrown shrubbery and shaking hands with neighbors who came by to see what was going on.

They opened up the building every Friday to the home-school students of Waveland, a group that includes his daughters and draws in a myriad of people in the town.

"We have been able to connect across multiple areas (through the home-school meeting). There's a NASA scientist, there are families who are local boat builders," Bridges said.

There are lots who don't know what having a real church family is like, he added. The first couple to join the church was previously divorced and felt unwelcome in church. Neither had darkened the door in ages — him, two decades; her, 12 years.

The Bridges family knocked on their door and invited them to a cookout. Christ can work miracles over a grill, Bridges explained. "They are now some of our most consistent members."

The church runs "about 47," Bridges said. Fifty would've been a rounder description, but Bridges knows it's 47. He knows all 47. They have his cell phone number.

"Brian and his family are out engaging the community, and folks are responding," said Steve Mooneyham, associational missions director for the Gulf Coast Association in Gulfport. The church, Mooneyham noted, is making "a significant impact with young adult families in the area and filling a niche that was lacking in the community."

The majority of the congregation are people who were formerly church members but "for whatever reason they haven't attended church in a while," Bridges said.

Bridges, his family, and his church have gone door-to-door seeking out those folks — a method that's proven effective — and they plan to do even more next year. For the pastor, it's a passion for the place and its people.

Waveland was the weekend getaway of the Bridges family when they were at New Orleans Seminary in pre-Hurricane Katrina days, and they had deep connections to the town, Bridges said. They had no intention of moving there. In fact, they were heading to a church he'd been helping start in Georgia.

Hurricane Katrina changed everything. It battered the Mississippi Coast, the Waveland community, and Waveland's First Church — and it battered Bridges' heart.

"We felt that God wanted us to start rebuilding churches on the Gulf Coast, and we felt like it was the right time to start doing that," he said. "So we did."

He's done much of it with the help of the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering (MLSMO), which provides vital support for church plants like his in the state.

"We're a direct benefit of that every month," Bridges said. "You can imagine the myriad of things we would need to get this running and keep it running, and the offering provides that."

The MLSMO has now become a year-round missions endeavor that is helping Mississippians learn about missions, pray for missions, give to mis-



DAUGHTER'S BAPTISM — Brian Bridges, teaching pastor at West Bay Community Church in Waveland, baptizes his daughter Joni, age 8, in the warm waters of the Mississippi Gulf Coast after her recent profession of faith. The church, which is meeting in the former First Church, Waveland, facility, is making "a significant impact with young adult families in the area and filling a niche that was lacking in the community," said Steve Mooneyham, missions director for Gulf Coast Association in Gulfport. (Special photo courtesy of Brian Bridges)

sions, and do missions. It is used to fund church plants like West Bay Community Church as well as ministries such as Garaywa Camp and Conference Center; Central Hills Retreat; the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force; literacy, criminal justice, and language-ethnic ministries; Christian Women's Job Corps; church planting; pastoral benevolence; interna-

tional collegiate ministry; associational mission projects; and volunteer missionary assistance.

For more information about the MLSMO, visit http://www.mbc.org/mission_strategy/missions.aspx.

Thornton, a 2003 Mississippi College graduate, is assistant editor of *The Alabama Baptist* newspaper in Birmingham.

CWJC participant excited to see family accept Jesus as Savior

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent

Pauline Burt has cried a lot lately — a whole lot. She cries at church. She cries in class. She cries at home. The tears of joy are not surprising, she said, considering that her whole life has changed.

"When you take Jesus as your Lord and Savior, it's by far the best change in your life you can ever experience," Burt said. "Have you ever felt like something was pulling on you? Something nagging at you in the back of your mind, trying to tell you something?"

That something, Burt said, was Jesus, and she finally met Him at a Christian Women's Job Corps (CWJC) meeting at First Church, Richland.

"I've had a miracle come into my life," she said.

It's been a long time coming. When Burt was a young teenager, she had to drop out of school to care for her mother, who had frequent seizures and was hospitalized often. "I didn't finish the ninth grade. I was the oldest, so I had to take care of her. I just wasn't able to do that and school, too," she said.

Last year the 41-year-old mother of three was approached by a friend who was taking GED classes from CWJC, a ministry of Woman's Missionary Union that equips women for life and employment. The friend asked if Burt and her oldest daughter Savanna, 22, would like to take the classes, too. They did.

"We have enjoyed it and loved the class," Burt said.

She's been working hard toward getting her GED, but God had been working hard on something else, she said — that nagging feeling in the back of her mind. One night in class, CWJC site coordinator Velvet Johnson asked the group if they died that night, would they know where they would go?

"I'd thought about that many times," Burt said. "I'd wondered." She asked Johnson to talk with her after class. "I told her I didn't know where I would go, but I wanted to know. She got to talking about Jesus, and I was saved in that church that night. It was a very moving night."

It didn't stop there. Two weeks later, she drove up at her house to see her

husband Bryan talking with the pastor of Byram's Hillcrest and two church members. The group was on a FAITH visit. The Burt family had attended Hillcrest's fall festival, so they had their names as prospects.

"Bryan accepted Jesus Christ that night as his Lord and Savior," Burt said. "I cried. I've been doing that a lot lately."

In the time since, the Burts — Bryan, Pauline, and their three daughters — have become actively involved with Hillcrest Church. Bryan and Pauline were baptized together on Nov. 29, and Savanna was baptized on Dec. 6.

"I didn't even know my little girl was thinking about it, but she said, 'Mama, I'd like to talk to the preacher. I want to get saved, too,'" Burt said. "It's an amazing thing that CWJC has started. I just can't say enough good things."

Johnson agrees that it's amazing what the Lord has done in the Burts' lives. "To watch one of the CWJC ladies receive salvation from our Lord and Savior is wonderful, but it is double wonderful to see her husband and family come to know the Lord," she

said. "Isn't that what it's about, reaching one life at a time?"

To top it off, the mother and daughter plan to get their GEDs before CWJC graduation in May. "My plans are to be a nurse so I can help others one day," Burt said, but she's not waiting until "one day" to pass on her newfound spiritual healing.

"I've got a nephew I'm working on. He's going into the military soon. I want him to get to know Jesus before he goes," she said. "There's been a big change in my life, and it's for the best. God is good. There's a lot of love now, and I just want to pass that on."

The Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering helps to provide leadership development, resources, and promotion for CWJC as each self-supporting site helps women move from dependency to self-sufficiency by obtaining job and life skills. For more information, visit mbc.org/mission_strategy/wmu/ or call (601) 292-3323.

Thornton, a 2003 Mississippi College graduate, is assistant editor of *The Alabama Baptist* newspaper in Birmingham.